Building Bridges of Understanding

‘Building Bridges of Understanding’, is a reading comprehension programme aimed at giving children the strategies they need to become good readers. By learning about these strategies, children can become more involved in the text they are reading or hearing, and so deepen their understanding of the text.

The comprehension strategies are:

- Prediction
- Visualizing
- Making connections
- Questioning
- Clarifying
- Declunking
- Inferring.
- Determining Importance
- Synthesis

For each strategy children learn a sign or action (called a comprehension processing motion or ‘CPM’) to indicate when they want to use that strategy during class reading.

Prediction:

Children make a ‘P’ sign to indicate when they want to make a prediction. Predictions can be made before, during or even after the story. Good readers make predictions (good guesses) about what might happen next in the story, using information they have gathered from the book cover, the blurb, the pictures etc. so far. Predictions do not have to be right. As they hear more of the story, the children's predictions may change.

Visualizing:

Visualizing while reading is like having a movie in your head of what is happening in the story. Good readers can have a picture in their head, but other senses such as sounds, smells and feelings are also used.
**Making Connections:**

Good readers make connections between what they read in the story and things that have happened to them or to people they know. They can also make connections to other books they have read, movies they have seen, or things that are happening or have happened in the world. So these connections can be text-to-text, text-to-self or text-to-the-wider-world.

**Questioning:**

Children make a ‘W’ sign for ‘I wonder why . . .’ Good readers ask themselves questions before, during and after reading. These questions can be generated by what they have read or seen in the book, or sometimes what is not shown or said in the text. Some questions can be left unanswered by the author and then good readers will use their own interpretation of the story to come up with their own answers.

**Clarifying:**

Children make a ‘C’ sign to indicate they need something clarified. This could be a word, phrase or idea that is confusing and needs further explanation. Good readers make sure that what they are reading makes sense to them, and so they stop to clarify the story when they are confused.

**Declunking:**

When a reader comes across a word that they cannot understand (when they have a Clunk), then they need to ‘declunk’ it. The children learn techniques for decoding these words through the declunking strategy, breaking the words down into prefixes, suffixes etc.

**Inferring:**

Children make an ‘i’ symbol to show they want to infer. Through the inferring strategy, children learn how to read the ‘invisible ink’ of the story, reading between the lines to determine what the author is hinting at, but not saying directly.

**Determining Importance:**

While reading a text, good readers separate out the essential and non-essential information and thereby determine what is important in the text. The determining importance strategy enables children to identify, sort and order the key pieces of information in the text.

**Synthesis:**

Synthesis is the skill of combining all the comprehension strategies and applying them before, during and after reading, so that the reader constructs their own individual meaning from the text.